STATEMENT

By

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At the International Atomic Energy Agency

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Mr. President,

I would like to begin by joining my distinguished fellow delegates in congratulating you on your election as the President of the 47th session of the IAEA General Conference. I am certain that your experience and professional guidance will bring this session to a successful and harmonious conclusion.

On behalf of my entire delegation I wish to commend the Secretariat and the Director General for their customary excellent preparatory efforts for this session.

Mr. President,

Events of the past year have demonstrated the centrality of the IAEA to the agenda that preoccupies the international community. These issues range from threats to global and regional peace and security stemming from proliferation and terrorism to growing demand for energy and concerns for health and safety. These as well as other important issues are all in front of this Conference.

Let me briefly touch on some of the most prominent issues.

Israel welcomes and supports the Agency's growing activity to diminish the threat of nuclear terrorism. The alarming correlation between states currently seeking WMD and those supporting terrorism calls for an especially vigorous international effort to block the spread of WMD to terrorist groups, and to the states supporting them. As an expression of our support for the Agency's efforts in this domain, we have made this year a further voluntary contribution to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund to complement our last year's contribution. We are also considering making a further contribution in kind.

Preventing nuclear or radiological capabilities from falling into the wrong hands requires that these materials remain under the full control of the competent national authorities. The Agency's role in this domain is especially important in setting up international safety and security standards, facilitating their implementation, and providing Member States with guidance and training on the establishment and operation of a comprehensive safety and security regime.

One example for the Agency's endeavors in this area is the promotion of the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials (CPPNM). This Convention constitutes a significant instrument for reinforcing national commitments of its members to safe and secure management of nuclear materials. Israel, as a State Party to this Convention, was hoping to promote the convention by actively participating in the professional discussions of the Legal and Technical Experts Group to strengthen the CPPNM. We cannot but lament that a consensus to do so has not been reached thus far.

In a related area, Israel is encouraged by the progress made in drafting the revised Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. It provides guidance to States to enhance their control over high-activity sources that in the past have caused, by negligence, lethal accidents, and in the future may be misused for radiological terrorism. We welcome the development of this Code and stand ready to support it.

Mr. President,

Maintaining and strengthening the Agency's capacity to confront all of its current challenges and new ones that loom large in the future, clearly demands greater resource requirements at these crucial times. Israel has thus supported the increase in the Agency's budget designed to enhance its safeguards capabilities and thereby contributing to its capability to deal with the acute challenge of curbing nuclear proliferation.

Mr. President,

I now wish to turn to the issue of nuclear power technologies and their dissemination. This issue is tightly coupled with the growing demand for energy, especially of the environmentally friendly type, as well as the proliferation challenges associated with dissemination of such technologies

The crucial need for greater reliance on sustainable, environmentally sound energy sources requires a much greater reliance on a combination of increased efficiency of use, renewable sources, CO2 sequestering and nuclear power, of which only the latter can supply the major part of the growing demand. This makes nuclear power a more attractive source of energy provided it can be produced safely and reliably. Just as

importantly, a new balance must be struck between development and improvement of nuclear power generation and addressing proliferation concerns arising from the expansion and global dissemination of nuclear infrastructures.

IAEA safeguards have been and remain central to mitigating such proliferation concerns. However, as we have been able to learn from a number of alarming events in recent years, the IAEA safeguards system by itself cannot guarantee effective verification and enforcement of non-proliferation obligations

A possible solution may be found in establishment of a new norm that governs access to modern nuclear power reactors. This norm could facilitate broad and improved access to such advanced reactors, coupled with international guarantees for supply of fresh fuel for these reactors to be provided by recognized existing capable vendors. In return, this norm would demand of the clients for the power reactor, as condition for supply, that they commit not to develop indigenous fuel-cycle capabilities and to return all the spent fuel to its vendor. This arrangement could free countries planning to use nuclear power from the economic burden of building and managing indigenous nuclear fuel-cycle facilities, and the additional environment burden of spent fuel storage. At the same time it will allow for safer and more secure management of these sensitive facilities, thereby ensuring that proliferation risk will not increase with growing number of nuclear power reactors.

In this context I wish to commend the Director General's statement on this issue and fully support the establishment of a group of experts for further formulation and promotion of relevant approaches.

I also commend the Director General and the Secretariat for their excellent choice for this year's Scientific Forum's theme: "New Horizons: Nuclear Energy in a Changing World". This Scientific Forum indeed provides an excellent platform for Member States to elaborate and exchange views and ideas related to nuclear power developments.

Mr. President,

I now wish to call your attention to some of the Middle East-related issues on this Conference's agenda. Unfortunately, there are two draft resolutions that concern the Middle East and stand out as extraneous to the IAEA Statute and mission.

First, there is Agenda Item No.20, which calls for establishing the Middle East as a NWFZ. Israel has made no secret its fundamental reservations to the language and present relevance of the consensus resolution, and has formally distanced itself from its modalities. However, in the interest of securing a consensus resolution, Israel has thus far been willing to endorse the language of last year's text, recognizing that a NWFZ could eventually serve as an important complement to the overall peace and security in the region. For many of the same reasons we will be willing to go along with this practice once more provide no changes are made to the text.

Second, regarding Agenda Item No.21 on the so-called "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities and Threat". Many alarming proliferation developments in the Middle East and in other regions have occurred during the last years although some became apparent to the international community only recently, especially after the last Board meeting. None of these

developments involves Israel though many directly challenge our core security interests. In contrast to these developments, Israel has neither threatened any of its neighbors, nor has it acted in defiance of any of its international commitments. We thus see no factual basis for this draft resolution, which has no other aim, but to use this Conference for a cynical political purpose. Those that requested to include Agenda Item No.21 in the Conference's Agenda would be well advised to recognize at last that there is no substitute to direct negotiations, reconciliation and freely reached agreements between the States of the region. It is Israel's view that after building trust between the all the Middle East parties and establishing good neighborly relations among them, the time would also be ripe to move towards regional arms control and disarmament arrangements in the conventional, chemical, biological, and missiles domains. These gains would then hopefully culminate with the establishment of a mutually verifiable nuclear weapon free zone.

My delegation will thus not be in a position to support Agenda Item No.20 on "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East", in case action is taken on Agenda Item No.21 on the so-called "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities and Threat". The tradition of the General Conference of trying to reach consensus is especially meaningful in dealing with complicated regional issues. Once the tradition of consensus resolution on the Middle East is broken, it will be very difficult to revive it in the future. Israel thus sees absolutely no point and worst still, considerable danger to the cooperative atmosphere of this Conference in acting on Agenda Item No.21.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to express our appreciation for the Agency's assistance through Technical Cooperation Fund to a

regional project involving Israeli and Jordanian entrepreneurs. The Mediterranean area fruit fly eradication project can serve as an excellent model. I hope that such a common enemy to all the regional states could encourage further regional cooperation. Israel looks forward to working together with the Director General and the Secretariat on further regional cooperation in the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, and hopes that as in previous years, reason and moderation will prevail in the current resolutions of the General Conference. These will strengthen the Agency in fulfilling its mission and facing the acute challenges that lie ahead of us.

Thank you.